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CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL AUTHORITY

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Chairman Pringle and Authority Members

**Date:** August 31, 2009

**From:** Mehdi Morshed  
Executive Director

**Subject:** Agenda Item 9 – Approval of Public Information and Communications Contractor

### Discussion:

The Authority issued a Request for Proposal for Public Information and Communications services on July 17, 2009. The Public Information and Communications consultants will be responsible, directly to the Authority, for ensuring: 1) public awareness of the Authority's activities, above and beyond that which is part of the state and federal project-level environmental process, 2) that all activities of the Authority are transparent and all relevant information and activities are made available as expeditiously as possible, and 3) that the public is provided with access to information and means of communicating views and concerns to the Board and staff.

The deadline for the submittal of proposals was on August 12, 2009. The Authority received proposals from the following nine applicants:

- KAYS Communications
- Hershey/Cause
- MWW Group
- Zooka Creative
- Mercury Public Affairs
- Deutschman Communications Group
- Porter-Novelli
- Fleishman Hillard
- Edelman

All of the written proposals were evaluated by a three-member committee consisting of Carrie Pourvahidi, Jeffrey Barker, and Mike Bowman (Deputy Secretary of the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency). The proposals were evaluated for cost, level of understanding of the high-speed train project, staffing and management plans, and approach to the project. The following five firms scored over 85 percent on their written proposals and were invited to participate in an oral interview on August 27, 2009 in Sacramento:

- Mercury Public Affairs
- Deutschman Communications Group
- Porter-Novelli
- Fleishman Hillard
- Edelman

In the oral interviews, the firms' presenters were asked a series of questions focusing on their grasp of the project's major challenges, their specific approaches to outreach, their abilities to measure their performance

against the Authority's objectives, and their knowledge of specific regions affected by the proposed rail system.

Based on the written proposal, and the oral presentation and interview, the evaluation committee unanimously recommends that the firm of Mercury Public Affairs be retained for the Public Information and Communications contract.

The firm demonstrated a firm understanding of the proposed high-speed rail project, clearly understands both the importance and challenges of providing timely and accurate information to the public, and has assembled a capable team to assist the Authority.

**Recommendation**

The staff recommends that the Authority delegate to the Executive Director the ability to enter into an agreement with Mercury Public Affairs as the selected Public Information and Communications Consultant.